

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 05344

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, UR, US
SUBJECT: WAR COLLEGE VISIT AND MILITARY EXCHANGES

REF: (A) MOSCOW 3935, (B) STATE 067069

SUMMARY: MOD HAS STATED THAT IT WILL NOT ACCEPT WAR COLLEGE EXCHANGE THIS YEAR, ALTHOUGH IT WOULD HELP IF GROUP WERE TO COME VIA INTOURIST. SOVIETS PRESSED FOR REPLY ON THEIR SENIOR OFFICER EXCHANGE PROPOSAL. SOVIETS HAVE A VARIETY OF REASONS FOR OPPOSING WAR COLLEGE VISIT AND IF WASHINGTON WISHES THE VISIT TO GO AHEAD IN APRIL WE RECOMMEND THAT IT BE DONE THROUGH INTOURIST CHANNELS. WE, OF COURSE, WILL PROVIDE ASSISTANCE, BUT IT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED THAT VISIT IS APT TO BE LITTLE MORE THAN TOURISTIC. WE RECOMMEND ALSO THAT WE AGREE IN PRINCIPLE TO THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR ANNUAL EXCHANGES OF "SENIOR
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OFFICERS." END SUMMARY.

1. DATT DELIVERED THE ESSENCE OF PARA 3, REF B, TO GEN. MAJ. KHOMENKO, MOD (UVS), 16 MARCH 78. HIS REPLY WAS THAT THE PROPER AUTHORITIES WOULD STUDY THE PROPOSALS, BUT THAT HE COULD GIVE A PRELIMINARY NEGATIVE RESPONSE ON THE SUBJECT OF A WAR COLLEGE EXCHANGE. KHOMENKO

REPEATED THE EARLIER-FURNISHED RATIONALE THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE NO COUNTERPART UNIVERSITY, AND THAT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE DOES NOT HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION - I.E., THE BROAD-BASED, NATIONAL-LEVEL SUBJECTS TAUGHT AT THE WAR COLLEGE. THUS, ACCORDING TO KHOMENKO, MOD HAS RULED OUT AN EXCHANGE VISIT THIS YEAR BECAUSE (1) THEY CANNOT RECIPROCATATE WITH AN EQUIVALENT GROUP, (2) AN EQUIVALENT GROUP, BY THEIR DEFINITION, WOULD HAVE TO BE ORGANIZED AT A HIGHER LEVEL THAN MOD, AND (3) THEY WOULD LIKE TO ELEVATE THE LEVEL OF THE EXCHANGE PROGRAM.

2. KHOMENKO DID ADD, HOWEVER, THAT THE SOVIETS ARE NOT AVERSE TO RECEIVING A VISIT BY THE WAR COLLEGE, PROVIDED THAT IT IS NOT VIEWED AS AN EXCHANGE. HE ADDED THAT IF THE PROPOSED VISIT (9-22 APRIL) TAKES PLACE, WE (MOD AND DAO) COULD WORK TOGETHER TO TRY TO ARRANGE SOME FORM OF "MILITARY PLAN" FOR THE VISIT AND THAT, LIKEWISE, EXTRA-MOD ASPECTS SHOULD BE COORDINATED WITH MFA. THE GROUP WOULD TRAVEL VIA INTOURIST, AND WOULD CONSEQUENTLY HAVE NO RECOGNIZED OFFICIAL STATUS IN THE USSR.

3. DATT CONTINUED TO PRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EXCHANGE ASPECT OF THE WAR COLLEGE VISIT, STATING THAT WHILE WE LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING AND STUDYING THE SOVIET PROPOSALS FOR A HIGHER LEVEL VISIT WE ALSO FEEL IT
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IMPORTANT TO CONTINUE EXCHANGES SUCH AS LAST YEAR'S WAR COLLEGE-GEN. GUDZ EXCHANGE. THE ESSENCE OF THE SOVIET RESPONSE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

A. FIRST, A COMPLETE REITERATION OF THE REASONS EXPRESSED EARLIER (NO EQUIVALENT, DESIRE TO INCREASE LEVEL, ETC.).

B. THEY ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT A REGULAR PROGRAM OF EXCHANGES BETWEEN SIMILAR-LEVEL MILITARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS COULD BE A FUTURE POSSIBILITY.

4. SOVIETS THEN QUERIED WHEN THE U.S. REPLY WOULD THEIR SENIOR OFFICER EXCHANGE PROPOSAL WOULD BE AVAILABLE. DATT REPLIED THAT THE U.S. WOULD FIRST STUDY THE REACTION TO CURRENT (WAR COLLEGE) PROPOSAL, AND THEN DECIDE ON THE SOVIET PROPOSAL.

5. ON MARCH 20 POL COUNS RAISED SUBJECT WITH MFA'S USA DIVISION DEPUTY CHIEF, FEDOSEYEV, MAKING POINTS CONTAINED REF B. HE ASKED IF RESPONSE OF MOD'S KHOMENKO WAS ACCURATE STATEMENT OF SOVIET OFFICIAL POSITION AND FEDO-

SEYEV REPLIED AFFIRMATIVELY, SOFTENING THIS WITH THE QUALIFIER "MORE OR LESS," AND ADDING THAT HE WOULD CHECK AGAIN WITH MOD.

6. REASONS FOR SOVIET POSITION: THE FOLLOWING ARE THE EMBASSY'S THOUGHTS ON THE REASONS FOR THE SOVIET INTEREST IN BROADENING AND RAISING THE LEVEL OF THE EXCHANGES.

-- THE SOVIETS DO NOT CONSIDER THEIR MILITARY SCHOOLS AS IMPORTANT VEHICLES FOR ALL-AROUND DEVELOPMENT AS WE DO. RATHER, THEY ARE MORE STRICTLY MILITARY INSTRUCTION

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COURSES AND THE ATTEMPT TO GIVE THE STUDENTS ANY "BROADENING" OR "BROAD-GAUGED" EXPERIENCE IS NOT PART OF THEIR GOAL. THUS, WHILE A TRIP ENHANCES THE CURRICULUM OF OUR WAR COLLEGE, IT IS AN INTERRUPTION IN THE CURRICULUM OF THEIRS.

-- THEY TEND TO DOWNPLAY THE VALUE OF STUDENTS, AS WELL AS THEIR STATUS. FOR EXAMPLE, WHILE NEGOTIATING THE GUDZ RECIPROCAL VISIT LAST FALL, DATT WAS ADVISED BY GEN. MAJ. BORISOV THAT STUDENTS JUST DON'T COUNT IN THE SOVIET REALM OF THINGS. THEY SUPPORTED THIS BY SENDING ONLY ONE TOKEN STUDENT WITH THE GROUP OF SENIOR OFFICERS.

-- WITH STUDENTS EXCLUDED, YEARLY TRIPS WOULD MEAN THAT

FACULTY MEMBERS WOULD GO ON SUCH TRIPS REGULARLY, THUS GIVING THEM A PRIORITY POSITION FOR THE TRIPS WHICH WE SUSPECT THE SOVIETS DO NOT WISH THEM TO HAVE. WAR COLLEGE FACULTY MEMBERS ARE PROBABLY NOT CONSIDERED THE TOP CHOICE FOR SUCH A SOUGHT-AFTER PLUM.
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-- SINCE A TRIP TO THE WEST SUCH AS THIS IS SO DESIRABLE THE SOVIETS PROBABLY WISH TO HAVE THE FLEXIBILITY TO USE IT AS A REWARD AND TO SPREAD THE CHOICE OF CANDIDATES OUT TO INCLUDE MORE THAN JUST WAR COLLEGE FACULTY.

-- BY CHANGING THE EXCHANGE INTO ONE FOR "SENIOR OFFICERS" THIS ELIMINATES THE PROBLEM WHICH THE SOVIETS WOULD FACE EVERY YEAR IN DECIDING IF U.S. CIVILIANS SHOULD BE ALLOWED ON THE TRIP. THIS LAST IS A MINOR, BUT IN SOVIET EYES, NOT AN INSIGNIFICANT CONSIDERATION.

-- FINALLY, THE SOVIETS ARE VERY PROTOCOL CONSCIOUS AND ANY LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO EXCHANGE VISITS BY U.S. "STUDENTS" WITH SOVIET "FACULTY" WOULD NOT BE APPEALING TO THEM.

7. RECOMMENDATION: AS THE DEPARTMENT CAN SEE FROM THE ABOVE THERE ARE SUBSTANTIAL REASONS BEHIND THE SOVIET ATTITUDE AND THEREFORE WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THAT ATTITUDE WILL QUICKLY OR EASILY CHANGE. IN OUR OPINION AN EXCHANGE OF WAR COLLEGE VISITS IS OFF, FOR THIS YEAR AT LEAST. IF WASHINGTON WISHES TO HAVE THE U.S. WAR COLLEGE STUDENTS VISIT THE SOVIET UNION AS PLANNED IN APRIL, WE RECOMMEND THAT WE ACCEPT THE SOVIET OFFER TO ASSIST IN AN INTOURIST TOUR AND THAT PREPARATIONS FOR SUCH A TOUR BE MADE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITH THE INTOURIST OFFICE IN WASHINGTON. WE WILL GIVE THE VISIT SUPPORTING ASSISTANCE FROM HERE INCLUDING REQUESTING THE PROFERRED ARRANGEMENTS AT MOD, BUT WE ARE NOT SANGUINE THAT A USEFUL PROGRAM CAN BE DEVELOPED.

8. WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATION ON HOW TO PROCEED WITH THE SOVIETS ON THE ENTIRE QUESTION OF MILITARY EXCHANGES:

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-- WE SHOULD AGREE IN PRINCIPLE WITH THE SOVIETS THAT YEARLY EXCHANGES OF "SENIOR OFFICERS" SHOULD TAKE PLACE AND THAT THE COMPOSITION OF THESE GROUPS SHOULD BE CLOSELY APPROXIMATE IN SIZE AND COMPOSITION IN EACH

YEAR'S EXCHANGE. WE SHOULD TELL THE SOVIETS THAT WE AGREE THAT SUCH VISITS WOULD ROTATE AMONG THE SERVICES AS WELL AS INCLUDE MULTI-SERVICE GROUPS.

-- WE SHOULD EMPHASIZE OUR RELUCTANCE TO END THE WAR COLLEGE EXCHANGE, BUT CONCEDE TO THE SOVIETS ON THIS IN FAVOR OF THE SENIOR OFFICER EXCHANGE PROVIDED THAT IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE WAR COLLEGES OF EACH COUNTRY, IF THEY SO DESIRE, WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE VISITS TO THE OTHER COUNTRY EACH YEAR AND RECEIVE SOME FORM OF MILITARY PROGRAM IN THE COURSE OF THE VISIT.

-- WE SHOULD REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO THE EXCHANGE OF MILITARY LECTURERS AND TELL THE SOVIETS THAT WE ASSUME THE ANNUAL LECTURER EXCHANGE WILL CONTINUE AS BEFORE.
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